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## ABSTRACT

The manual provides information needed to recruit, train, and supervise parent aides to work with abusive and neglectful parents. The manual considers the goals and objectives of the program; the roles and responsibilities of professionals and paraprofessionals; and the recruitment, screening, and matching process; and guidelines for training, ongoing supervision, and program evaluation. Chapters cover the following topics (sample subtopics in parentheses): nature of a parent aide program (goals, objectives, and roles and responsibilities); parent aide/client relationship (development of the relationship, transition period, partial dependency, independence, and termination); program development; program implementation (recruitment, screening, referral, and matching process); training (behavioral objectives for such areas as dynamics of child abuse and neglect, emotional and physical development of the child, discipline versus punishment, and communication skills); and supervision, inservice training, and evaluation. Appended are sample application and contract forms, a listing of regional child abuse and neglect resource centers, a chart showing forces affecting parent-child interactions, suggested program evaluation procedures, and two sample handouts for the training program. (DB)

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# PARENT AIDES

## IN CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT PROGRAMS



THE USER MANUAL SERIES

This manual was developed and written by Carla D. Gifford, Félica B. Kaplan and Marsha K. Salus. It was edited and produced by Kirschner Associates, Inc., Washington, D.C. under Contract No. HEW-105-77-1050.

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# **PARENT AIDES**

## **IN CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT PROGRAMS**

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## PREFACE

The use of paraprofessionals in the child abuse and neglect service delivery system is not new. Paraprofessionals are trained aides who work with professionals. Many agencies have found that the use of paraprofessionals increases the efficiency of professional staff and allows them to indirectly serve more clients. The opportunity for using paraprofessionals exists in every community and the possibilities are boundless. One such program which has proven to be effective in the treatment of child abuse and neglect is the parent aide program. Parent aides may be either volunteer or paid workers.

Families who are experiencing abuse and neglect problems often lack support, warmth and understanding from their families and friends. Out of frustration these parents may look to their children for the warmth and understanding they need. Children, however, are not always able to meet the needs of their parents.

Parent aides, in their role as "special friends," can allow abusive and neglectful parents to experience emotional support and acceptance and at the same time provide these parents with a model for change. The parent aide, by acting as a warm, understanding adult friend, can help to meet these parents' needs. The parent can gradually begin to lean on the parent aide rather than on the children. Ideally, because of the support provided to them by parent aides, abusive and neglectful parents can develop the ability to be responsible for their lives and the lives of their children.

This manual is designed for use by Child Protective Services, but may be used by many other professionals in coordination with CPS. It provides the specific information needed to develop and implement a parent aide program. It includes the goals and objectives of the program; the roles and responsibilities of professionals and paraprofessionals; and the recruitment, screening and matching process. It also provides guidelines for training, ongoing supervision and program evaluation.

## I

### WHAT IS A PARENT AIDE PROGRAM

Since abusive and neglectful parents generally have suffered emotional deprivation as children, they need to experience a relationship in which their dependency needs are met, they are accepted as worthwhile individuals, they are able to establish trust in another person, and they are helped to achieve independence. A well-trained and supervised parent aide can provide this type of therapeutic relationship. The major emphasis of the parent aide program is placed on the development of this type of nurturing relationship. Relationships between parents and parent aides are informal and long-term, generally lasting between 12 and 24 months. This relationship, once developed, can be used as a vehicle for resolving family problems, such as inappropriate child rearing practices.

Professional constraints such as high caseloads and the formality of the worker-client relationship may inhibit the development of this kind of relationship. Parent aides, on the other hand, can be trained in sufficient numbers to work on a one-on-one basis with individual families. In addition, the informality of the relationship allows them to be friends to the family and supportive of the family.

In addition, parent aide programs are a cost effective means of providing treatment to abusive and neglectful families. Parent aides can be either volunteers or part-time paid aides. As volunteers they would receive little or no remuneration except possibly for expenses such as gasoline or special gifts. On the other hand, indigenous, nurturing individuals who cannot afford to volunteer their time could be paid at least minimum wage. In addition parent aides can be trained and supervised with minimal cost to the agency providing the service.

### GOALS OF THE PARENT AIDE PROGRAM

The primary goal is to help abusive and neglectful parents change their unhealthy pattern of behavior toward their children to one which will enable them to live as a healthy, functioning family unit.

Subsidiary goals include:

- High risk situations are neutralized.
- Parents develop the ability to trust and establish support systems within the community.

- The parents learn social skills;
- The parents' self-esteem improves.
- The parents are able to recognize impending crises and develop the skills to deal with them effectively.
- Children are seen as individuals with thoughts, feelings and needs.
- The parents derive pleasure from being with their child.
- Child rearing techniques improve.
- In cases where the child has been removed, the child is returned as soon as possible.
- The child will not experience abuse or neglect in the future.

#### OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAM

When parents demonstrate the following behaviors, the goals of the program have been reached.\*

- Parents have transferred their dependency needs from the child to the parent aide. This manifests itself in a decrease in the number of abuse and neglect incidents and a marked increase in requests for assistance from the parent aide during crisis situations.
- Reaching out to neighbors, friends, relatives and/or helping organizations in times of crisis and stress replaces the primary dependence on the parent aide. The ability to reach out

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\* Schmitt, B. D. and Beezley, P. *The Long-Term Management of the Child and Family in Child Abuse and Neglect*. *Pediatric Annals*, 1976.

to others is evidenced through discussion with the parents, the parent aide and others involved with the parents.

- The parents are using the therapy prescribed. They are keeping appointments and contracts, talking freely, and indicating in their statements to the worker and the parent aide that the therapy is helpful.
- The parents are using more appropriate and consistent child management techniques as evidenced by their ability to discuss specific improvements they have made in dealing with their children and by the worker's documentation of the improvements.
- As witnessed by the parent aide and/or the worker, the parents have demonstrated impulse control when their children are being particularly difficult. The parents are also able to tolerate the child's expressions of negative feelings toward them, such as "I hate you."
- The parents have asked for advice regarding child rearing and have displayed their ability to implement this advice through their discussions and through observations of both the worker and the parent aide.
- It is evident through the discussion and actions of the parents that they have recognized and solved some of their child rearing problems.
- The parents demonstrate in both their discussions and actions that their child's behavior is congruent with that of other children of the same age.
- The parents express the awareness that the child is an individual with needs, feelings and rights of his/her own.
- In conversations with the parent aide or worker, the parents speak about the child in positive terms.

- The parents keep all scheduled visits in cases where the child has been removed from the home.
- A healthy parent/child interaction manifests itself in the parents' ability to approach the child and smile at him/her during play periods. It is also exhibited when the child seeks help from the parents and seems relaxed and unafraid in the parents' presence.
- The abusive or neglectful parent has demonstrated improvement in all of these areas and is able to recognize this improvement. It is also evident to the worker and parent aide.
- In an abusive family the passive spouse has developed the ability to intervene on behalf of the child. This is demonstrated through conversations with the parents and child, as well as through observations by the parent aide and worker.
- The child protective worker and other professionals have documented specific improvements in the parents' ability to cope with crises, including:
  - the parents no longer experience numerous, overwhelming crises
  - the parents are able to discuss how they deal with crises
  - the parents have requested assistance during crises and have been able to utilize it
  - the parents have solved specific crises
  - the parents are able to recognize situations which are stressful and deal with them effectively, averting a crisis

- the parents' marriage is stable and they are able to provide each other with emotional support, and are able to relieve each other in child care and housework responsibilities
- the number and depth of the parents' interpersonal relationships have increased;

#### ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Developing specific guidelines for the functions of the parent aide program director, the CPS worker and the parent aide are necessary if the program is to be effective. Roles and responsibilities may differ somewhat from those described here depending on the program design. It is important to note that if the program is developed and implemented outside of Child Protective Services, the program director will have a greater responsibility for coordination.

##### Parent Aide Program Director

The following responsibilities are those which the administrator of the program must fulfill on an ongoing basis. If the director is responsible for the development of the program, additional tasks are required. Suggestions for planning and implementing a parent aide program will be discussed in Chapter II.

- Plan and implement a campaign to recruit parent aides.
- Select parent aides through an initial screening process and after a thorough evaluation at the completion of the training program.
- Match parent aides with appropriate families.
- Train CPS workers to carry out their responsibilities in the parent aide program.
- Coordinate and direct the training program, including:

- matching the content of the training program to the objectives of the overall program and the tasks performed by the parent aides to fulfill these objectives
- compiling existing information regarding child maltreatment; the CPS agency and other community agencies; and parent aide programs; this information should be distributed to the parent aides during the training
- creating behavioral objectives for parent aides for each training session
- determining training methods
- recruiting professionals from various disciplines to provide input at training sessions
- reviewing and procuring audiovisual materials and procuring equipment and facilities for training sessions
- evaluating the training program.

- Provide ongoing supervision of the parent aides.
- Provide inservice training for the parent aides.
- Provide ongoing supervision of CPS workers involved with parent aides.
- Maintain records on parent aides and clients served.
- Conduct an evaluation of the program every six months.
- Encourage community support for the program.

All of these functions will be discussed in detail in subsequent sections in the manual.

## Child Protective Worker

The following responsibilities apply to those CPS workers who are either providing direct services or monitoring cases where a parent aide is involved.

- Provide ongoing supervision to parent aides, through:
  - biweekly telephone contact
  - being available both during and after work hours for emergency consultation
  - offering support and encouragement.
- Confer with the program director on a regular basis.
- Incorporate information regarding the parent aide's involvement with the family in the case file.

## Parent Aide

The following is a list of roles the parent aide must perform in order to facilitate needed changes in the client's attitudes and behavior.

- Establish a relationship of trust and friendship, through:
  - being caring and honest
  - showing primary concern to the parent
  - listening and offering encouragement and support
  - reaching out to the parent
  - spending at least four hours per week with the client initially and maintaining telephone contact.

- Help the parent become involved in activities designed to reduce isolation and to establish support systems, through:
  - helping the parent locate and use appropriate community resources
  - encouraging the parent to become involved in local social, recreational and educational activities
  - encouraging the parent to participate in different supportive activities, such as Parents Anonymous.
- Encourage school and medical appointments by providing transportation and/or accompanying the parent to and from appointments.
- Engage in enjoyable activities with the parents, such as shopping and picnicking.
- Provide guidance in household tasks, such as meal planning, budgeting, helping with child care needs.
- Help the parent become aware of child development.
- Help the parent learn how to provide nurturance to his/her child.
- Help the parent to learn appropriate and consistent child management techniques, through:
  - modeling and offering suggestions
  - encouraging the parent to become involved in parent education courses or groups.
- Complete the initial training program, participate in ongoing training and supervision and in the evaluative process.

- Maintain records of client contacts
- Maintain confidentiality requirements of the agency.

### Limitations of Parent Aides

The following is a list of activities which parent aides should *not* engage in, because they would most likely inhibit the development of a relationship with the parent and/or decrease the productivity of the relationship. Parent aides should not:

- Become so emotionally involved in their relationship with the parent that they cannot objectively assess problems.
- Focus their attention on the child. In fact, they should not become involved with the child at all unless asked to do so by the parent.
- Take action in emergency situations without consulting a caseworker.
- Discuss the abuse or neglect situation unless the parent initiates the discussion.
- Accuse the parent of being a "bad" parent.
- Volunteer advice or criticism.
- Assist the parent in developing homemaking and/or parenting skills until they have developed a relationship with the parent.
- Pressure the parent to adopt the parent aides' style of living, beliefs, or cultural patterns.
- Give medication.
- Discuss their own problems with the parent.

### Differences Between Paraprofessionals and Professional Staff

Working with abusive and neglectful families requires that professionals and paraprofessionals perform some similar tasks, such as developing a trusting relationship with the client and assessing

the needs of the family. However, there are several important differences in their responsibilities that must be noted. Parent aides' responsibilities do not require that they be involved in the program on a full-time basis. Also, if parent aides become aware of abusive or neglectful incidents, they must report them to the CPS worker. They are not responsible for the protection of the child; that responsibility lies with the child protective worker. In addition, parent aides may be asked to assist in the assessment of potential harm to the child. If necessary, parent aides may testify in court in behalf of the parents; however they should not testify against the parents.

## PARENT AIDE/CLIENT RELATIONSHIP\*

The relationship which develops between clients and parent aides is the most important factor in the success of the parent aide program. This relationship passes through a number of stages, including: a development stage, a transition stage, a partial dependency stage, and a stage of independence; ending with the termination of the formal relationship. Exhibit I, at the end of this chapter, depicts this relationship.

## DEVELOPMENT OF THE RELATIONSHIP

During the initial period of contacts between parent aides and clients, the parent aides' behavior should promote the development of a therapeutic relationship. During this stage, parent aides must make themselves readily available to the clients and reach out to the clients in a caring manner. Parent aides should be relaxed and natural with clients, and they should show the clients that they are concerned about them. These parents have probably never experienced knowing someone who would really listen to them and recognize them as individuals, and parent aides can provide this kind of experience. Parent aides demonstrate that their primary concern is for the parents. They are willing to reach out to these clients, to provide them with support and to make extra effort to help them. This type of concern is novel in the lives of these parents. Parent aides are also very honest in their relationships with parents.

As a result of the parent aides' behavior, clients learn that they can trust them. Clients begin to see their parent aides as dependable; they realize that the parents aides' behavior is consistent and predictable, and that they can be relied on. The clients should also come to believe that the parent aides care about them as individuals. Clients begin to have their dependency needs met by the parent aides, thus decreasing their need to depend on their children. This method of caring continues throughout the parent aide/client relationship.

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\*Leiserson, Ellen. *Parent Aides: An Attempt at a Collective Definition of Their Role and Function.* Presented at the National Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect, 1978.

One unique characteristic of the development stage of the parent aide/client relationship is that parent aides are willing to give to the clients without expecting anything in return. And clients are usually aware of this. However, as the relationship continues to develop, clients often want to give the aides something in return for their friendship, perhaps a demonstration of improved child care or a personal gift. Parent aides must learn to handle this type of situation gracefully; they should accept the gift from the client, knowing that this act of giving is part of the client's growth.

#### TRANSITION PERIOD

This stage is reached once the parent aide/client relationship has been established. The clients trust the parent aides and may begin to test their affections through negative behaviors. The parents learn that it is acceptable to feel angry and thus start to verbalize anger and frustration. Parents may be somewhat hostile to parent aides during this stage. The parents are also learning that it is possible to exercise control over their impulses, even during times of stress.

During the transition period in the relationship, parent aides must increase their support to the parents. At the same time, the parent aides must help the clients to set limits for themselves. The focus of the parent aides' behavior should be on the clients' capacity to accept responsibility for changing some of their inappropriate patterns of behavior.

#### PARTIAL DEPENDENCY

This stage is the beginning of autonomy and improved self-esteem on the part of the parents. They have learned that the parent aides will care for them as people despite their negative behaviors. This causes the parents to be more positive about themselves, as well as others. They become less self-critical and learn to be self-nurturing.

The parent aides at this stage should positively reinforce the new behaviors of the parents, especially patterns of effective parenting. The parent aides can also help the parents learn problem solving techniques and discourage the impulsive or passive reactions that have been characteristic of the parents in the past.

## INDEPENDENCE

At this point in the relationship, the parents' self-esteem has improved. The parents are able to recognize and avert potential crisis situations; the parents are able to use others appropriately in times of stress; the parents recognize that their children have feelings and needs and enjoy being with them; and the parents are using appropriate and consistent child-rearing techniques. Thus, the parent has resolved the problems that brought them to the attention of the Child Protective Agency.

The parent aides continue to support and care for the parents, but begin to decrease their contact. The parent aides will also discuss with the parents the positive changes they have made.

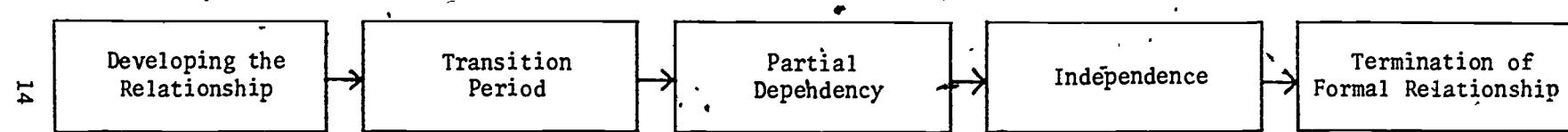
## Termination

The decision to formally terminate the parent aide/client relationship should be based on evidence that the original problems causing the abuse/neglect have been resolved to the point that the family can protect the child. There should also be evidence that the parents will voluntarily seek assistance when they are experiencing difficulties. This decision should be made jointly, by the CPS worker, the parent aide and the program director.

It is important to remember that although the formal relationship will terminate, parent aides and clients should continue to have some type of contact. When considering termination, parent aides should receive a great deal of supervision. There are, however, some general procedures to follow when terminating the relationship.

- There should be a gradual decrease in parent aide/client contact.
- There should be a gradual weaning of the client's dependence on the parent aide in conjunction with the client's development of other supports.
- There should be a discussion between the parent aide and client and between the CPS worker and client regarding the positive changes that have been achieved.
- The client should know that, although the formal relationship has ended, contact with the parent aide can be maintained.

EXHIBIT I  
STAGES IN THE PARENT AIDE/CLIENT RELATIONSHIP



### III

#### DEVELOPING A PROGRAM

Developing a parent aide program requires a great deal of fore-thought and planning. This type of program can be developed by various agencies, such as a mental health center, a family service agency, or a hospital; however, coordination with Child Protective Services (CPS) is important because they will probably be a referral source. Since CPS is most likely to come in contact with families who would benefit from this kind of program, it would also be appropriate for them to be the initiators.

The following information suggests steps in the planning process. Steps need not occur in this order, but all steps should be included.

- Review and compile existing materials on parent aide programs
- Conduct a needs assessment
- Determine program goals and objectives
- Develop the program design
- Establish roles and responsibilities for the program director, CPS workers and parent aides
- Develop criteria for selection of parent aides
- Develop criteria for selection of clients
- Determine referral and matching procedures
- Develop training program
  - Define population
  - State training needs
  - Define goals and objectives
  - Analyze training topics
  - Write goals and behavioral objectives for every topic
  - Determine training hierarchy
  - Locate trainers for specific sessions
  - Assemble written material for handouts
  - Locate audiovisual material
  - Locate facilities and equipment

- Develop recruitment campaign
  - Prepare program brochure/flyer
  - Select potential resources for recruitment
- Develop supervision process
- Develop an evaluation process
  - Training evaluation
  - Client evaluation
  - Program evaluation

The exhibits on the following pages outline the program process.

#### DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED

Regardless of how much planning and forethought is involved in developing a program, some difficulties are inevitable. There are, however, some ways of minimizing the difficulties program organizers will encounter.

Developing a parent aide program requires administrative support within the initiating agency. If agency administrators believe the program is a necessary and worthwhile service, they will be likely to support organizational efforts through provision of funds and/or allotment of staff time. A great deal of coordination is required when the program is initiated outside of CPS. It will not only be necessary to gain administrative support of the local social service department, but also to gain the support of CPS staff.

Community support may also help in the development of the program. The support of civic and professional groups and organizations may help to overcome administrative resistance. In addition, these groups and organizations can provide assistance through donation of funds and participation of individual members.

In the initial stages of program development, it is important to have reasonable expectations. It is more effective to begin with a small number of parent aides, because this helps to ensure adequate training, matching, and supervision.

In summary, there will always be set-backs, but it is important to determine ways of getting past them and moving ahead.

EXHIBIT II  
OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAM

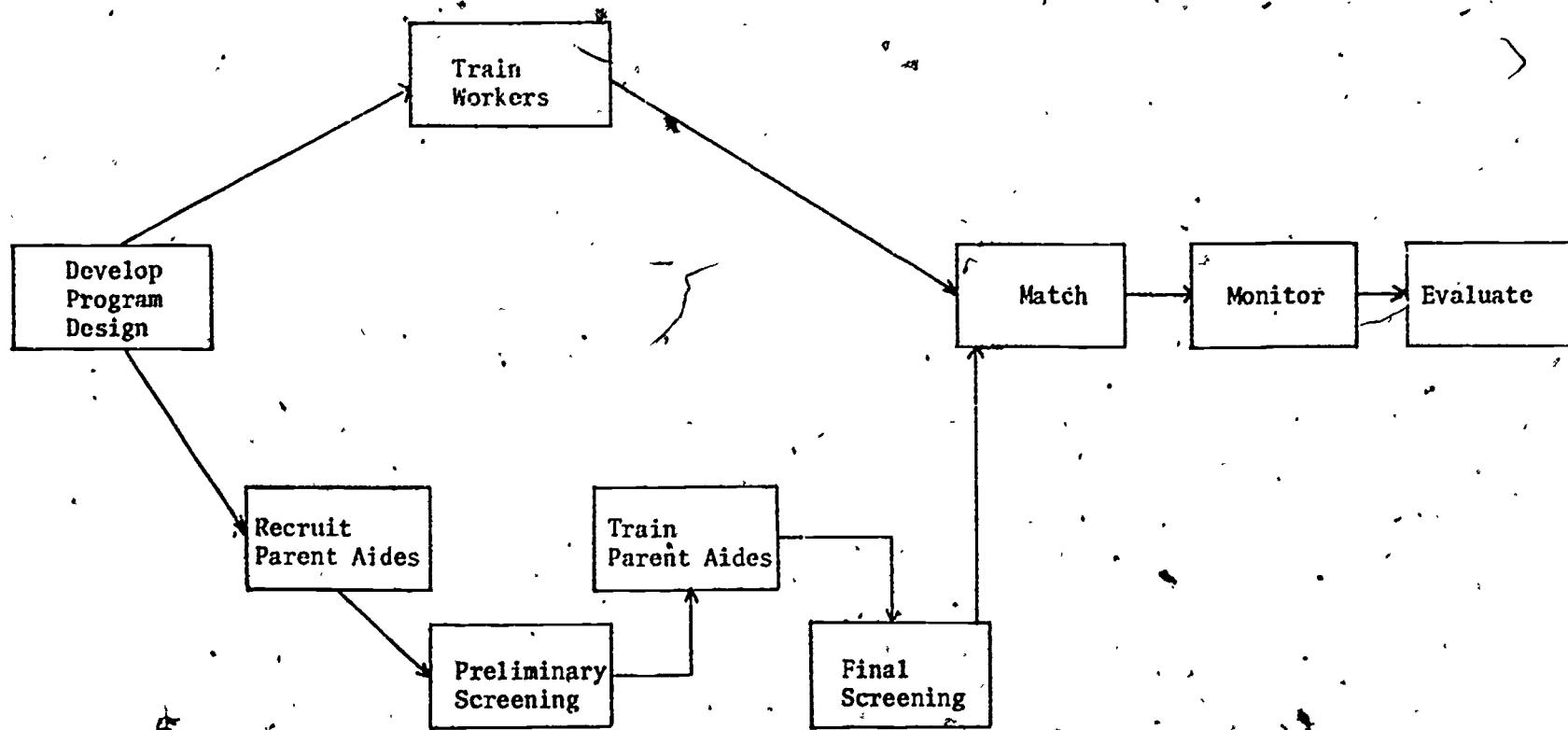
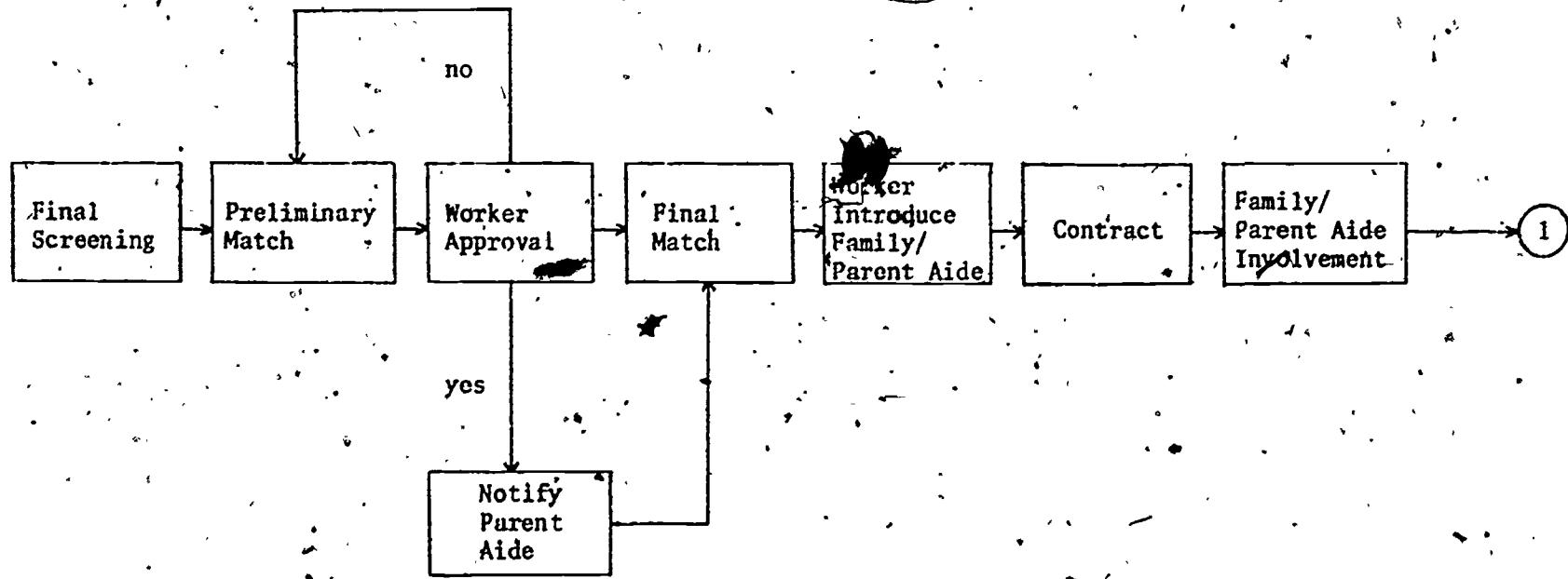


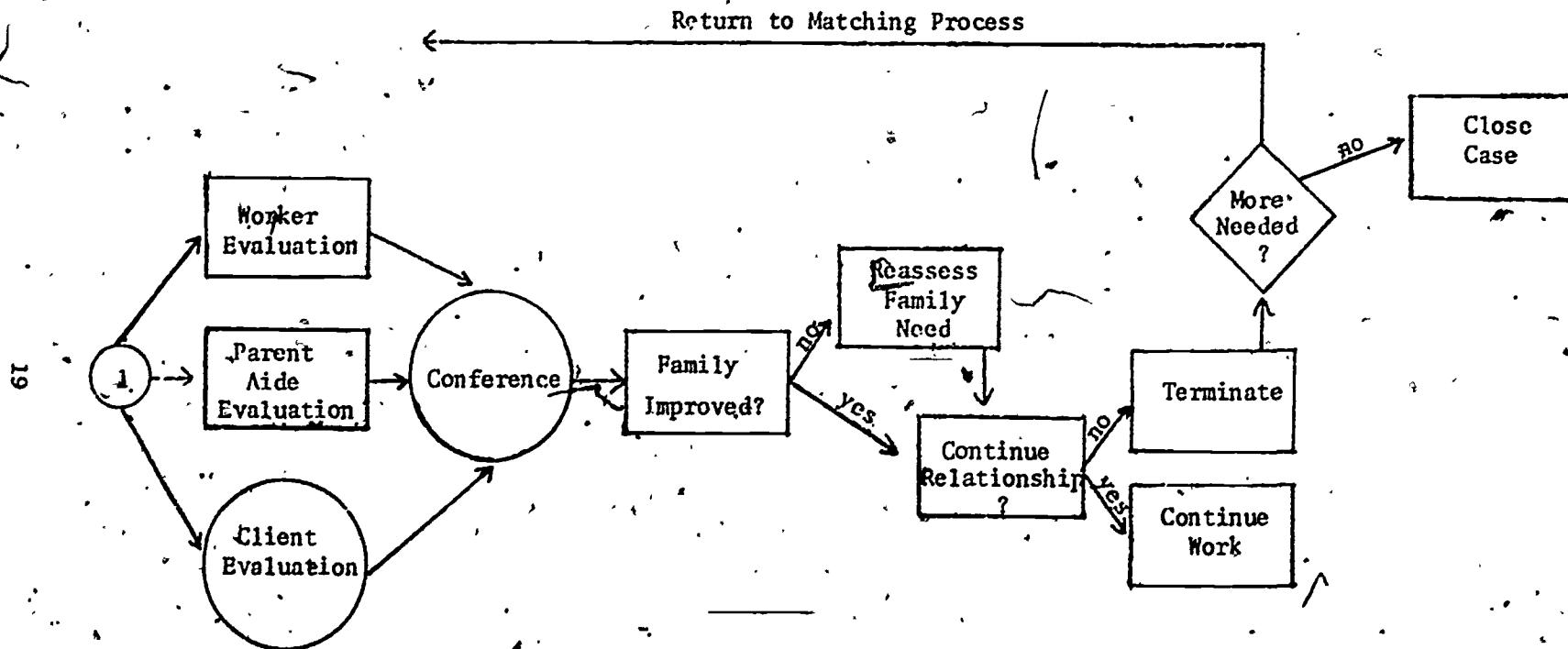
EXHIBIT III  
TRACKING INDIVIDUAL PARENT AIDES



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32

EXHIBIT III - (Con'd)



## IMPLEMENTING THE PROGRAM

Once the program design has been developed, implementation can begin. Implementing a parent aide program involves recruiting and screening potential parent aides, screening potential families, matching volunteers and families, and training CPS staff.

### RECRUITMENT

Instituting an effective and efficient recruitment campaign is an important step in implementing the program. Community awareness is a necessary prerequisite for recruiting potential parent aides. Although specific recruitment methods will be dependent on the type of community, there are several standard ways through which recruitment can be accomplished. Procedures involved in implementing a community awareness program are clearly set out in the publication *How to Plan and Carry Out a Successful Public Awareness Program on Child Abuse and Neglect*, by the National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect, DHEW Publication No. (OHD) 76-30089.

#### Preparation of Brochure/Flyer

Preparation and distribution of a brochure/flyer describing the program is an effective recruitment method. The brochure should provide a brief description of: the parent aide program, responsibilities of parent aides, the time commitment, the criteria for selection of parent aides, and the name and telephone number of a contact person. The brochure/flyer should be attractive to the eye. It is advisable to have a symbol or logo which is easily recognizable and represents the program.

Distribution points for brochures will vary according to the community. However, in general, brochures should be placed in public places or in places that attract large numbers of people. For example, in urban areas brochures can be displayed in public libraries, recreational centers, schools and public meeting places. In rural areas, brochures/flyers can also be made available in supermarkets and laundromats.

#### Media

Advertising through the local media is the most effective way of recruiting because it involves a very small amount of staff time, yet reaches a large number of people. Advertisements for parent aides can be placed in local newspapers. An advertisement such as Exhibit IV, following this page, can be used for this purpose. However, a

EXHIBIT IV  
SAMPLE NEWS RELEASE

Parents are the focus of the Layton County Department of Social Services parent aide program which is designed to help deal with family problems which may lead to child abuse or neglect.

In this program, coordinated by the county's Child Protective Services unit, parent aides serve as caring friends to abusive or neglectful parents by helping them adjust to raising a family. Aides work with a family for a minimum of six months, serving as listening posts and making frequent home visits and telephone calls. Volunteers who are over 21 years of age and who are either parents themselves or who have extensive child care or social work experience are needed as parent aides.

Training is provided and consists of eight initial sessions, followed by inservice training and supervision. Attendance at the training, inservice and supervision sessions are a mandatory part of the program. The next group of parent aide training sessions will begin in March.

Persons interested in further information or in serving as parent aides should contact Ms. White, Child Protective Services, Layton County Department of Social Services, 236-5400.

newspaper article focusing specifically on the parent aide program would attract even more attention. Program staff may be asked to provide general information on child abuse and neglect in addition to specific information on the parent aide program.

The Federal Communications Commission requires that all radio and television broadcasting companies allot time for public service announcements. This is an excellent recruitment resource. Usually all that is required is submission of a written announcement for broadcast. Exhibit V is a sample public service announcement which could be used for this purpose. Some television stations will request that the parent aide program provide a representative who would tape the announcement at the station.

Most local radio and television stations have "talk shows" where current issues, problems and interests are discussed. Since the problem of child maltreatment is a highly charged public interest, many of these shows will allot time for discussion of the parent aide program. They will usually request that the program representative be an "expert" in the problems of child abuse and neglect, so that he/she will be able to provide general information on this as well as more specific information on the parent aide program. Ideally, the program representative should have prior public speaking experience.

Since the media are inundated with requests for public service announcements, it is important to follow up a written request with a telephone call. This is more likely to ensure the use of program announcements. New programs would be well advised not to use the media to recruit for a small program. While television, radio and newspapers reach the greatest number of people, the response of prospective parent aides, and requests for information and speaking engagements are likely to be overwhelming.

#### Speakers Bureau

Establishment of a speakers bureau is another effective means of recruitment. Interested members of local civic, church or social groups can be trained to speak about the parent aide program at meetings of various groups and organizations. These individuals should have had some prior public speaking experience.

The training of speakers should include basic information on child maltreatment. It should also provide information on the purpose and goals of the program, the roles and responsibilities of parent aides, the time commitment involved, and the training program and supervision provided for parent aides. Supplemental reading material which focuses on child abuse and neglect and on parent aide programs should be provided during the training.

EXHIBIT V

SAMPLE PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

Raising a family is no easy chore and for some parents it can mean more problems than they can cope with on their own.

If you would like to help parents cope with family problems which may lead them to abuse or neglect their children, Layton County's Parent Aide Program can be the answer.

People who are over 21 years of age and who are either parents themselves or who have extensive child care or social work experience, are needed as parent aides.

Both introductory and inservice training and supervision are provided for parent aides. The next session will be offered in March.

For more information call Ms. White, Child Protective Services, Layton County Department of Social Services, 236-5400. That's parent aides at 236-5400.

Once trained, each speaker should receive a list of organizations and groups to contact. They should also be supplied with program brochures or flyers that can be distributed at speaking engagements.

### Project-Oriented Groups

Direct contact with project-oriented groups such as church groups, Rotary Clubs, and Women's Clubs may elicit support, including provision of volunteers and/or donation of funds. The program director or individuals from the speakers bureau could contact and speak to these groups. In addition many have newsletters which are sent to individual group members. These newsletters may publicize the program through articles or advertisements.

### SCREENING

Criteria for selection of parent aides is based on personal qualifications rather than education or training. Because the parent aide/client relationship is intended to be therapeutic and requires a great deal of emotional involvement, it is essential that the screening process be very selective.

### Characteristics of Prospective Parent Aides

In selecting parent aides, it is advisable to look for the following characteristics.

- They should be parents themselves or should have had extensive experience in the child care field. Parents are preferable because they have experienced the daily joys and difficulties of raising a child and can relate these experiences to the client, thus forming a common bond. They can also use these experiences to teach appropriate child care.
- They should be over 21 years of age and have at least a high school education.
- They should have experienced a satisfying and nurturing relationship with their own parents.
- They should be warm, caring, flexible individuals who are able to reach out to others.
- They should be emotionally mature, stable and self-directed.

- They should not be fearful of authority figures or have a need to assert themselves in a critical, judgmental or authoritarian manner.

### Prerequisites for Acceptance in the Program

Prospective parent aides should:

- Demonstrate a feeling of self-worth to the interviewer.
- Be able to answer questions about their own childhood and their own families to the satisfaction of the interviewer.
- Be emotionally mature and stable individuals who have been successful in dealing with life and would like to share their experiences with others.
- Have support systems in their own lives, such as family, relatives, and friends.
- Have the support of their friends and/or relatives to be involved in the program.
- Be able to maintain a warm and caring relationship with the client, but allow for independent growth.
- Exhibit self-assurance and the ability to deal effectively with hostility and rejection.
- Be experienced in nurturing others and feel comfortable in that role.
- Be willing and able to commit themselves to the program and be able to spend the requisite time with the client.
- Be flexible enough to adapt to new and difficult situations and be able to assist others toward this end.

## Screening Process

The screening process may take various forms, depending on the size of the program. There are, however, several suggested steps to follow.

A telephone conversation with the program director or representative should be conducted initially. The purpose is to provide applicants with a description of the program and to determine their interest. If applicants express an interest in participating in the program, a program brochure and application would then be sent to them. A sample application form is included in Appendix A. It is advisable to keep a list of names, addresses and telephone numbers of potential parent aides.

After receipt of the completed applications, the program director would interview prospective parent aides. In assessing applicants, the program director should take into account responses to individual questions, as well as the total picture presented by the applicant. The interviewer must also use his/her ability to judge character in selecting participants in the parent aide program. There are, however, several areas which should be covered during the interview.

- The source and extent of applicants' motivation for participating in the program. Some questions related to this might include:
  - How did you become interested in the program?
  - Why do you want to participate in the program?
  - Do you believe you can commit yourself to working in the program even in difficult and stressful situations?
- The quality of applicants' previous and present experiences with their own children, spouses, parents, and friends. Questions related to this issue could include:
  - What were your parents' expectations of you as a child? What are your expectations of your own children?
  - What kind of friendships did you have as a child? What kind of friendships do you have now? Are there people you can count on?
- Applicants' prejudices and biases as they may apply to abuse or neglect cases. Some questions which would help assess this include:

- How do you feel about abusive and neglectful parents?
- What are your feelings about abused and neglected children?
- Applicants' ability to cope with their own personal problems. Questions related to this could include:
  - What kinds of problems did you experience as a child? Do any of those problems affect you currently?
  - How you deal with stressful situations?
- The applicants' ability to maintain their sense of self and also allow others to do so.
  - Identify some of the relationships in which you have done most of the giving? How did you respond?
  - How do you react in situations where another person presents a point of view different from your own?
  - How do you react if a friend suggests that you change plans you have made?
- The applicants' ability to develop warm, caring relationships, without becoming enmeshed in clients' lives.
  - How do you feel about caring for someone who cannot care back?
  - Do you feel comfortable nurturing others?
  - Are you able to maintain objectivity about a friend's problems?

Exhibit VI provides specific questions which may be asked during the initial interview. Applicants should understand that there are no right or wrong answers. The program director should explain to all applicants that, if they are selected, another interview would be conducted after completion of the training.

During training the director will be able to assess the prospective parent aides' strengths and weaknesses and thus their suitability for the program. The final interview will include a discussion of the program director's observations and perceptions of the potential parent aides and the potential parent aides' responses to the training.

## EXHIBIT VI

### SAMPLE INITIAL INTERVIEW

It is necessary to ask you some personal questions which will be kept confidential. The purpose for asking these questions is to protect both you and the client. When working with child abuse and neglect cases, your own unresolved problems may arise because of the nature and seriousness of the situation.

How did you become interested in the program?

What are your hobbies and interests?

Does your spouse support your participation in this program?

How do you feel about abusive and neglectful parents?

What are your feelings about abused and neglected children?

How do you feel about whether or not a woman should remain at home when her children are young?

How do you feel your religious beliefs would affect the parent aide/client relationship?

Identify some of the relationships in which you have done most of the giving. How did you respond?

How do you feel about caring for someone who is unable to reciprocate?

How were you disciplined as a child?

What harsh discipline did you experience?

How do you discipline your own children?

What do you believe warrants a spanking?

What kinds of problems did you experience when you were a child? (Ask specific questions to determine the degree of difficulty.)

What were your parents' expectations of you as a child? What are your expectations of your own children? How are these similar or dissimilar?

What kind of friendships did you have as a child? What kind of friendships do you have now? Are there people you can count on?

Have there been any serious illnesses or difficulties with the law in your family of origin or your present family?

Have there been any alcohol or drug abuse problems in your family of origin or your present family?

Have any of your family members had violent outbursts of temper or acted out physically?

How often have you moved? How long do you plan to remain in this area?

Do you believe you can commit yourself to working in the program even in difficult and stressful situations?

Is there any type of family you would rather not work with? Would you feel comfortable working with a family of another race?

What are your plans for your children when you are visiting with your client? If you needed to respond to a crisis who would care for your children?

It is important to remember that the screening process should be very selective. All potential parent aides should understand that not everyone is well-suited to participate in the program, and that it requires a unique person to make the intense emotional investment needed. The decision regarding acceptance into the program will be based on the mutual consent of the program director and prospective parent aide.

#### REFERRAL AND MATCHING PROCESS

An abusive or neglectful parent must want a parent aide if the relationship is to be successful, but not all parents are suited to participate in the program. Exhibit VII following this page describes some criteria for case selection.

Child protective workers are usually responsible for case selection and referral. The determination of the appropriateness of a case should be made after consultation with other professionals involved with a particular family. Once a case has been selected, the CPS worker would discuss the program with the family. The worker should introduce the program in a positive manner, by explaining to the parent that a parent aide is a person they can talk to and spend time with. The parent should understand that the parent aide is a caring person who has had satisfying relationships and who has a lot to give others. CPS workers should also discuss with parents why they would benefit from participating in the program. During this discussion, the worker can elicit concerns and answer questions.

If the family decides to participate in the program, they should be asked to sign a release of information form. This would allow the agency to provide information regarding the family to the parent aide and allow the parent aide to communicate with the agency regarding the case. The family should understand that the worker and parent aide will have ongoing communication. In order to help allay the parents' fears, the purpose of this collaboration should be explained and parents should be encouraged to express their concerns and ask questions.

The worker should then complete a referral form, an example of which is included in Appendix A, and submit it to the program director for consideration.

#### Matching

In order to make a successful match, the program director must first review the case record and then discuss with the worker handling the case the reason for referral to CPS, the current situation, the family's strengths and weaknesses, treatment goals and objectives,

and the reason for referral to the parent aide program. Based on this information, on the availability of parent aides, and on the appropriateness of the parent aides for the particular case, the director will decide if the family can be matched successfully.

Selection of a parent aide for a particular family will be based on the following criteria.

- Examination of the needs of the parent. Does the parent need an assertive figure or a more relaxed, easy going person?
- Examination of the strengths and weaknesses of a parent aide in relation to a particular family. Is a parent aide flexible enough to meet this family's needs? Would a particular parent aide work best with a depressed client?
- A peer relationship is the most effective match. Matching parent aides and parents who are close in age is preferable. It is inadvisable to match a parent aide who is younger than the parent.
- Match in terms of parent aide/parent similarities: Are the parent's and parent aide's children approximately the same age? Do the parent and parent aide have a child with special needs? Are the parent and parent aide both divorced?
- Match according to sex, race, and ethnicity. This will provide a common ground on which to build and may avoid potential problems.
- Match in terms of location. Close proximity is preferable, not only for the parent aide's convenience but also to allow quick access during crises or for spontaneous contacts. However, the parent aide and client should live far enough from each other to discourage the client from dropping in too frequently.
- Do not match a parent aide with a parent who has more education, who is more affluent or more sophisticated.

When the program director has made a preliminary match, its feasibility should be discussed with the CPS worker handling the case. If the worker concurs, a joint meeting between the parent aide,

EXHIBIT VII  
CRITERIA FOR CASE SELECTION

Parent aides are appropriate in the following abuse and neglect situations.

- Parents who have referred themselves
- Families who are socially and psychologically isolated
- Parents who are emotionally immature
- Parents who have low self-esteem
- Families who are experiencing a temporary crisis which has resulted in situational abuse
- Families who are experiencing stress and thus have the potential for abuse and neglect problems
- Young mothers who need assistance with parenting
- Chronic neglect cases where the neglect results from a lack of resources or lack of knowledge about appropriate child care

The following abuse and neglect situations are not appropriate.

- Parents who have severe emotional problems, such as psychosis, clinical depression, passive-aggressive or sadistic personalities
- Parents who are suffering from substance abuse
- Situations in which one or both of the spouses is volatile
- Spouse abuse cases, which present a threat to the parent aide
- Sexual abuse cases

worker and program director will be conducted, at which time the parent aide will be provided with specific information concerning the family. Parent aides should be allowed to reject a case.

Once the parent aide has accepted the case, the worker should introduce her/him to the family. Since this meeting is a stressful situation for both the parent and the parent aide, the worker may need to facilitate the discussion. At this time, the parent and the parent aide should sign their respective contracts, samples of which are included in Appendix A.

#### TRAINING OF CPS STAFF

Child protective workers play an important part in the parent aide program, both in the referral and matching process and in supervising the parent aides. It is essential that they receive training with regard to the purpose and goals of the program and with regard to their roles and responsibilities in the program. The parent aide program director can provide this information to workers by conducting a workshop.

The workshop would include the following:

- A discussion of the purpose and goals of the program
- A discussion of the roles and responsibilities of parent aides and how they fit into the CPS system
- A discussion of CPS worker roles and responsibilities in the program
- A discussion of how to make appropriate referrals, including:
  - which clients are best suited to participate.
  - how to complete the referral forms
- A discussion of the matching process and the worker's role in that process
- A discussion and role play of how to introduce the program to their clients and how to introduce the parent aide to the parent
- An explanation of their role in supervision of the parent aides involved with their clients.

In order for the program to be effective, it is imperative that CPS workers be involved in, accept responsibility for, and recognize the benefits of the parent aide program. The program cannot succeed unless CPS workers are willing to make case referrals and work with parent aides.

## TRAINING

The training program is designed to provide parent aides with a general mental health orientation to the problem of child abuse and neglect. The following are the performance objectives of the parent aide training program.

- Upon completion of the training, a paraprofessional should have developed an understanding of the dynamics and treatment of child abuse and neglect, as evidenced through group discussions and successful completion (at least 80%) of an objective questionnaire.
- Upon completion of the training, the paraprofessional should have developed the necessary skills for establishing a therapeutic relationship with the parent, as evidenced through role play, experiential exercises and the subjective observations of the trainer.

The initial training of parent aides should be extensive, including didactic material, role plays, experiential exercises, audiovisual materials and supplemental reading materials. During the training, participation should be encouraged and objective questionnaires should be administered. These discussions and questionnaires will allow the program director to assess the suitability of prospective parent aides.

Although there will be some expenses involved in the training program, there are ways to keep costs at a minimum. Training assistance may be available through the National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect (NCCAN) Regional Resource Centers which are listed in Appendix B. For example, audiovisual materials can be borrowed from the NCCAN Regional Resource Centers.

Professionals within the community, such as mental health professionals, nurses, and educators, can serve as trainers for specific training sessions. These trainers should be "experts" in a particular field, such as child development, and should have experience with child abuse and neglect. These community professionals may be willing to conduct training sessions without charge. In addition, community facilities and equipment can be procured with no cost to the agency providing the training.

Another alternative would be to have training provided through colleges, universities, or community colleges, with the provision that trainees may receive credit for successful completion of training.

## TRAINING PROGRAM

In order for the training to be maximally effective, attendance should be limited to 15-20 people. The training sessions are discussed in suggested order of presentation; however, sessions may be added or deleted or the order may be revised according to the needs of the specific program.

It is suggested that some type of "get acquainted" exercise be conducted at the beginning of the first session. This would allow trainees to get to know and feel comfortable with each other. One such exercise could be to have the trainees pair off and spend 10 minutes getting to know each other. They would then reassemble and introduce their partner to the entire group. The trainees should be able to give some information about their partner which was not expressed verbally.

The following material describes the type of information which should be included during training sessions on various topics.

### Overview of Abuse and Neglect

This session serves as an introduction to the problem of child abuse and neglect. It includes general information on the nature of the problem with a discussion of definitions and types of abuse and neglect, the extent of child maltreatment, and a brief discussion of the causes and effects of child abuse and neglect. It should also include specific information on the extent of child maltreatment within that particular state. In addition, the characteristics of members of families experiencing child abuse and neglect problems and the role of the parent aide in treatment and prevention of the problems should be discussed.

This session will include:

- A two-hour presentation by a psychologist/psychiatrist/social worker who has extensive experience in child abuse and neglect
- An audiovisual presentation; for example, "Ordinary People," "Child Abuse and Neglect: An American Concern," or "Barb: Breaking the Cycle of Child Abuse and Neglect"

- A 30- to 60-minute discussion period.

### Behavioral Objectives

After this session, parent aides should be familiar with general information regarding the problem of child maltreatment and should be aware of their role in the prevention and treatment process.

Specific behavioral objectives of this session include:

- Parent aides should be aware of the widespread and all-encompassing nature of child maltreatment and should be able to demonstrate this knowledge during the discussion period.
- Parent aides should be able to describe the general causes and effects of child maltreatment to the trainer.
- Parent aides should display empathy for abusive and neglectful parents and recognize both parents' and children's need for treatment. The parent aide's comments and discussion should demonstrate these feelings.
- The parent aide's discussion should show a desire and commitment to help both parents and children.
- Parent aides should express an understanding of their role in treatment and prevention of child abuse and neglect.

### Overview of Child Protective Services

This session describes the every day operation of child protective services, including the legal aspects, information on confidentiality, and the investigation and treatment process. This session should also provide information on the number of cases received and processed by CPS in the particular state and appropriate local jurisdiction, what types of cases are treated within the CPS system, and caseload size. Parent aides should also be given information on their relationship to the CPS agency and on the role of the paraprofessional in the CPS treatment process.

This session will include:

- A presentation by the CPS coordinator or supervisor and several CPS workers

- Follow-up discussion
- Passing out the evaluation questionnaire (Exhibit VIII).

### Behavioral Objectives

At the completion of this section, parent aides should be aware of various aspects of CPS operations and of their role in the CPS system.

Specific behavioral objectives of this session include:

- Parent aides should be able to explain their role in the CPS treatment process and their relationship to the CPS agency.
- Parent aides should be able to describe the legal obligations of the CPS agency, the investigation process, the general characteristics of cases that remain in the CPS system, their role in the CPS treatment process, and confidentiality requirements.

### Dynamics of Child Abuse and Neglect

This session provides an overview of the dynamics of child abuse and neglect. This includes a profile of abusive and neglectful parents, including indicators in these parents, and an exploration of their feelings, fears, and reaction patterns. In addition, it includes a profile of abused and neglected children. The session should also provide information on the emotional and physical effects of child abuse and neglect on all family members. There will be a discussion of the precipitating factors in abuse and neglect situations.

There are a variety of materials describing the dynamics of abuse and neglect situations which can be utilized to present this information. For example, the World of Abnormal Rearing (WAR) Cycle is described by R. E. Helfer in *The Diagnostic Process and Treatment Programs*, DHEW Publication No. (OHD) 75-69. Another possible way to perceive the dynamics in abusive and neglectful families is to consider the forces that impact on these families. A diagram summarizing some of these forces is included in Appendix C.

Within this session special emphasis will be placed on treatment methods effective in abusive and neglectful families. This session will include:

- Presentation by a social worker (CPS worker or program director)

EXHIBIT VIII

EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SESSION  
ON OVERVIEW OF CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES

Please answer these short essay questions at home and return at next session.

1. Describe briefly the legal obligations of the CPS agency.

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2. Describe how the agency investigates complaints.

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3. Describe the kinds of cases which are retained in the system for treatment.

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4. Describe the role of the parent aide in the CPS treatment process.

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5. Describe the importance of confidentiality to the parent aide program.

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- Follow-up discussion
- Passing out evaluation questionnaire  
(Exhibit IX).

### Behavioral Objectives

After attending this session, parent aides should be able to describe characteristics of abusive and neglectful parents, situations which precipitate abuse, as well as basic treatment methods for abusive and neglectful families.

Special behavioral objectives include:

- Parent aides should be able to describe the general upbringing of abusive and neglectful parents.
- Parent aides should be able to describe the three components necessary for abuse to occur.
- The types of abuse and neglect, characteristics of abusive and neglectful parents, and consequences of abuse and neglect should be clear to parent aides.
- Parent aides should be able to describe appropriate treatment for abusive or neglectful parents.

### Dynamics of Marriage and Family Life

This session provides a basic introduction to the dynamics of marriage and family life, particularly as they contribute to the problems of child abuse and neglect. This discussion includes information on the stresses of normal family life and the stages most married couples go through. The relevance of methods and problems of communication between spouses should be emphasized. Information specific to abusive and neglectful parents, including the additional stresses they experience, their coping mechanisms, and the reasons they choose their spouses, should also be presented.

This session should include:

- A presentation by a sociologist, psychologist, or social worker
- Follow-up discussion.

EXHIBIT IX

EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SESSION  
ON DYNAMICS OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Please answer briefly the following questions and return at the next session.

1. Describe the general upbringing of abusive and neglectful parents.

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2. Describe three elements necessary for abuse to occur.

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3. Describe the types of abuse and neglect, the characteristics of abusive and neglectful parents, and the consequences of abuse and neglect.

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4. Describe the basic treatment methods for abusive and neglectful parents.

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## Behavioral Objectives

After completing this training session, parent aides should be able to discuss the dynamics between abusive and neglectful parents, including their communication patterns. They should also be aware of the effects of raising children on these couples. In addition, they should be prepared to describe the positive influence their relationship can have on the family.

Specific behavioral objectives include:

- Parent aides should be able to explain why abusive and neglectful parents marry people who reinforce their sense of isolation and lack of self-esteem.
- Parent aides should understand how abusive and neglectful parents' feelings of mistrust, isolation, and low self-esteem affect their marital relationships.
- Parent aides should be able to explain how the inability of abusive or neglectful parents to meet their own and their spouses' dependency needs affects the family.
- Parent aides should be aware of the types of stress children place on marriages.
- Parent aides should be able to describe the communication patterns which increase the potential for child maltreatment.
- Parent aides should be able to discuss ways in which their relationship with the parents positively influences the clients' family life.

## Emotional and Physical Development of the Child

This session provides a basic introduction to the stages of emotional and physical development of children, with emphasis on the emotional aspects. Generally, it will be possible only to cover about the first eight years of the child's development in the time allotted, but more information can be provided for parent aides in subsequent inservice training sessions. Resources which might be helpful in describing physical and emotional stages include: *Infants and Mothers: Individual Differences in Development* by Barry Brazelton published in 1969 by Delacorte, *Childhood and Society* by Erik Erikson published in 1964 by Norton, and *Motivation and Personality* by Abraham H. Maslow published in 1970 by Harper and Row.

This session should include:

- A presentation by a mental health professional
- Follow-up discussion.

#### Behavioral Objectives

Upon completion of this session, parent aides will have a basic understanding of various stages of physical and emotional development. In addition, they will comprehend the tasks involved in each stage. As a result of this understanding, parent aides will also recognize the ways in which the upbringing of abusive and neglectful parents affects their behavior as adults and affects their methods of child rearing.

#### Discipline Versus Punishment

This session provides information on the effective means of disciplining children, with particular emphasis on the difference between discipline and punishment. The session should include discussion of disciplinary techniques used by the trainees and discussion of how parent aides would react if they witness an act of child abuse. In presenting this information, it is helpful to use contemporary approaches to child management, such as behavior modification or parent effectiveness training.

This session should include:

- A presentation by a mental health professional
- Follow-up discussion
- Handing out an evaluation questionnaire (Exhibit X).

#### Behavioral Objectives

Upon completion of this training session, parent aides should understand the difference between discipline and punishment. Specific behavioral objectives include:

- Parent aides should understand what discipline and punishment mean to them.
- Parent aides should, through their discussions, demonstrate that they can differentiate between discipline and punishment.
- Parent aides should understand the distinction between discipline and abuse.

EXHIBIT X

EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SESSION  
ON DISCIPLINE VERSUS PUNISHMENT

1. What is the difference between discipline and punishment?

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2. Is discipline better than punishment or vice versa? Why?

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3. What are some differences between the way an abusive or neglectful parent disciplines and the way other parents discipline their children?

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4. How do the needs of these parents affect their disciplinary techniques?

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5. What are three factors that should be considered when parents are trying to convey the rules they want their children to know?

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- Parent aides should be able to present alternative methods of discipline to parents.
- Parent aides should be able to explain how abusive parents' unmet needs affect their methods of disciplining their children.
- Parent aides should demonstrate that they understand the role of rules, reason, and consistency in discipline.

### Community Resources

This session provides information on resources available in the community. Abusive and neglectful families are generally isolated; they do not know what resources are available to them or how to take advantage of the programs they are aware of. Parent aides should be made aware of all resources available in the community and of the process for making use of these resources.

This session should include:

- A presentation by the program director or a CPS worker on community resources
- Distribution of a list of available resources with addresses and phone numbers for each.

### Behavioral Objectives

Parent aides, upon completion of this session, should be able to refer families to appropriate resources and to walk them through whatever application process is required before receiving services.

Specific behavioral objectives include:

- Parent aides should be able to explain services available to families through local welfare departments.
- Parent aides should be able to demonstrate a knowledge of other community resources available to the family.

### Communication Skills

The training sessions which focus on communication skills provide the trainees with skills necessary to develop a therapeutic relationship. These sessions will include information on values clarification, body language, active listening, and empathy. Although some didactic material will be presented, the skills will be learned

primarily through experiential exercises and role plays. It is important to remember that threatening situations should be minimized during the initial session. Participants should understand that everyone will make mistakes, and the purpose of these sessions is to allow them to change their behaviors before they are matched with a parent. There are a number of different sessions within this unit; however, the following behavioral objectives are relevant to all sessions in the unit.

### Behavioral Objectives

Upon completion of the communication skills unit, parent aides should be able to:

- Identify some of the feelings associated with being heard versus not being heard.
- After participating in role plays, parent aides should be able to point out instances where they have failed to listen to their partner, listened selectively, or failed to appropriately perceive their partner.
- Identify nonverbal communications they use frequently.
- Understand that some of their feelings are revealed through body language whether or not they are willing to express these feelings verbally.
- Interpret others' body language accurately.
- Describe and understand the ramifications of double messages.
- Perceive accurately the emotions underlying verbal communications from others.
- Role play assigned situations effectively.

### Values Clarification

The purpose of this session is to help parent aides recognize that everyone has a values system and that behavior is influenced by values.

This session can include:

- Presentation and discussion on values systems
- Experiential exercises.

Behavioral Objectives: After this session, parent aides should be aware that there are no absolute values, and that when working with an abusive or neglectful parent, they must identify differences in values systems and not impose their values on others.

Specific behavioral objectives include:

- Parent aides will demonstrate in role play and discussion that they are aware of their own values system and display respect for the values of others.
- Parent aides will recognize the similarities, as well as dissimilarities, between their values and those of abusive and neglectful parents.

Group Exercises: The following exercises could be used for values clarification.

- Instruct participants in small groups to list universal values. During this exercise parent aides should become aware that it is difficult, if not impossible, to identify such values, since exceptions can be found in other cultures and subcultures.
- Construct an exercise where parent aides list their own values and those which they believe are held by abusive and neglectful parents. The trainer would then instruct the parent aides to compare and contrast these values.
- Construct an exercise in which areas of the room are labeled strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, and strongly disagree, so that participants can position themselves to indicate their values. A situation should be described to which the trainees can react. For example, "I would encourage my husband to steal a neighbor's car to transport my family to the airport." After the parent aides react to this situation, the trainer would provide a second example with moderate to severe extenuating circumstances. This should produce a change in attitudes and insight into situation ethics.

#### Body Language

This session provides a general orientation to body language. It will focus on identifying nonverbal behaviors and will provide information on how to react appropriately to other's nonverbal communication.

This session will include:

- A presentation and discussion of nonverbal communication
- Role plays and experiential exercises.

Behavioral Objectives: After completion of this session, the trainees should be able to recognize how they express themselves nonverbally. They should also be able to understand and react appropriately to non-verbal communication by others.

Specific behavioral objectives include:

- Parent aides will be able to identify nonverbal behaviors.
- Parent aides will be able to recognize and understand their own nonverbal communication.
- Parent aides will use appropriate nonverbal communication during role plays.
- Parent aides will be able to react appropriately to non-verbal communication of clients as evidenced through discussions and successful performance during role plays.

Group Exercises: The following exercises could be used to teach body language.

- Construct an exercise where trainees divide into pairs and spend a few minutes standing as close to each other as is comfortable for them. Afterwards, the trainees should discuss how they felt during the exercise.
- Instruct trainees to express, nonverbally, feelings such as anger, fear, surprise, and pleasure. Upon completion of the exercise, the group would discuss their reactions.
- Construct an exercise in which two trainees play the parts of a parent aide and a client discussing a particular subject. The participants should focus on each other's body language and be able to identify it and describe how it affects the situation.

### Active Listening

The purpose of this session is to enable the parent aides to communicate effectively. Information will be provided on roadblocks to communication, as well as good and bad listening skills.

This session should include:

- A presentation and discussion of effective and ineffective listening skills

- Role plays and experiential exercises.

Behavioral Objectives: Upon completion of the session, trainees should be able to recognize good and poor listening skills. They should also have developed good listening skills which will enable them to communicate effectively with their client.

Specific behavioral objectives include:

- Parent aides should be able to recognize when they have failed to listen to another person and when they have listened selectively.
- Parent aides will understand roadblocks to communication as evidenced through group discussions.
- Parent aides will be able to point out when they or other trainees have used good listening skills.

Group Exercises: The following exercises may be used to teach effective communication skills.

- Construct an exercise in which trainees can practice using "I" messages. "I" messages state the speaker's feelings rather than the listener's behavior or motivation; for example, the speaker might say "I'm embarrassed" rather than "You made a fool out of me."
- Construct exercises in which trainees can use good and poor listening skills. Upon completion of the exercises, the participants and the entire group should discuss their reactions.

### Empathy

This session should provide the trainees with an understanding of empathy and how it can positively impact the relationship with their client.

This session should include:

- A presentation and discussion of empathy
- Role plays and experiential exercises.

Behavioral Objectives: After completion of the session, parent aides should be able to verbalize accurately the emotions underlying other trainees' verbal communication. They should also be able to use empathy skills when relating to their client.

Group Exercises: The following exercises could be used in this session.

- Construct an exercise in which two trainees would assume the roles of communicator and listener. The trainer should instruct the communicator to communicate a problem situation nonverbally to the listener. The listener should respond by communicating their perceptions verbally.
- Construct an exercise that allows the trainees to role play the initial visit with the family.
- Construct an exercise in which the trainer plays the parts of various types of clients, such as a hostile or a depressed client. The trainees should be expected to react appropriately in each situation.

#### Simulated Stress Exercises

Simulated stress exercises, as developed by The Family Service of Central Virginia, Inc., of Lynchburg, Virginia, allow the trainees to experience firsthand the problems that may abusive and neglectful families faces. The following are suggested ways to simulate stress situations.

- Instruct the trainees to isolate themselves by doing without their usual activities and conveniences for approximately three days. Some ways of simulating isolation could include:
  - Limit incoming telephone calls to one minute.
  - Use a neighbor's phone for outgoing calls.
  - Rely on friends or neighbors for transportation.
  - Do not engage in any social or recreational activities.
  - Do not watch television or read the newspaper.
  - Go grocery shopping with only ten dollars and plan to buy food for the equivalent of nine meals. Bring along one child when shopping.
- Instruct the trainees to obtain information about services from various public agencies. This exercise should be conducted after the trainees have experienced simulated isolation and should last for approximately two days. The following suggestions could be used for this purpose.
  - Trainees should call at least two public agencies at specific times, such as 11:45 or 1:10 or 4:15 p.m. They should ask for specific information regarding services and the application process.

- Trainees should then visit these agencies using public transportation only. They should sit in the waiting room for approximately 30 minutes.
- Trainees should also make site visits to several public agencies requesting information about needed services.

## SUPERVISION, INSERVICE TRAINING AND EVALUATION

Parent aides require continuous supervision and periodic inservice training sessions to be successful in their role. Likewise, it is necessary to evaluate the overall program, the initial training and client progress in order to maintain the effectiveness of the program.

## SUPERVISION

Parent aides can be supervised in various ways, but it is essential that they receive ongoing, indepth supervision. The various methods will be discussed separately; however, it is preferable to use them concurrently.

## Group Supervision

Group supervision provides parent aides with both professional and peer support and feedback. This type of supervision should be conducted biweekly for the first six to eight months of the parent aide/client involvement and then can possibly decrease to once a month. The Parent Aide Program Director is the likely person to provide group supervision; however, another program representative or CPS worker could also function as the group leader. Each session should address:

- The current status of each parent aide/client relationship.
- The current treatment goals. It should be determined if specific goals need to be amended.
- The difficulties parent aides have experienced in relating to their clients. Feedback should be provided by the group leader and other parent aides regarding alternative types of action. The group leader should help each parent aide focus on problems and ways to resolve them so as to avoid parent aides' feeling overwhelmed.
- The mistakes parent aides have made. Confrontation in a caring manner is essential to help parent aides change inappropriate behaviors related to the relationships with their client.

- The frustrations parent aides feel in working with their particular clients. Parent aides should be encouraged to express these feelings and acquire support from the group leader and members.
- The progress in the parent aide/client relationship and client progress. Parent aides should be assisted in recognizing progress in these areas.
- Positive aspect of the parent aide/client relationship. Parent aides require a great deal of encouragement and positive feedback both in regard to their specific actions and their overall contribution.

#### Supervision by CPS Workers

CPS workers should also be responsible for supervision of the parent aides involved with their clients. They should:

- Supervise parent aides, preferably on a weekly basis initially. This supervision can be conducted by telephone.
- Develop with the program director specific goals of the parent aide/client relationship and assist in their reassessment.
- Provide parent aides with suggestions on how they can handle specific problems effectively.
- Provide crisis supervision.
- Coordinate services.

#### Crisis Supervision

Parent aides should *not* handle emergency situations without consulting the program director, the CPS worker or other responsible staff. Parent aides should be instructed about methods for dealing with crisis situations.

Since crises can occur at any time of day or night, it is essential that parent aides be provided with the program director's and CPS worker's home phone numbers. They should also be given the state hotline

number, if one exists, in case help is not available elsewhere. This would give the parent aide access to other CPS workers in that jurisdiction.

Since parent aides do not have the authority to remove a child, their focus should be on providing support to parents who are in crisis, by helping them to reorient their thinking and to put their problems in perspective.

### INSERVICE TRAINING

After parent aides have begun to develop a relationship with their clients, they will most likely need inservice training sessions. These sessions could be conducted continuously or on an as needed basis.

As they work with their clients, parent aides will become aware of areas in which they need further training. For example, they may need more detailed information on how to deal with a depressed client or an intellectually limited client. They may also need specific information on developmental delays or nutrition. This information can be provided by the program director or by professionals in the community who have expertise in relevant areas.

### EVALUATION

Program effectiveness can be assessed in various ways. However, specific areas within the program must be evaluated in order to ensure their success.

#### Training Evaluation

The content of the training and the methods used must be evaluated in order to ascertain whether parent aides are receiving the information needed to deal effectively with an abusive or neglectful parent. The participants are the likely persons to assess the training. Parent aides should evaluate the training at the last session and again approximately three months after they have been involved with their client. The exhibit following this page provides a sample training evaluation form.

## EXHIBIT XI

## PARENT AIDE TRAINING EVALUATION

After being in the field for \_\_\_\_ months, as a parent aide, I feel that the training sessions listed below were:

	USELESS	SOMEWHAT HELPFUL	EXTREMELY HELPFUL
Introduction--Overview of Child Abuse/Neglect			
Overview of Child Protective Services			
Dynamics of Child Abuse/Neglect			
Marriage and Family Dynamics			
Physical and Emotional Development			
Discipline vs. Punishment			
Community Resources			
Communication Skills			
Simulated Stress Exercises			

For the next group of parent aides, what else do you think should be included? \_\_\_\_\_

What do you think should be left out? \_\_\_\_\_

## Client Improvement

The clients' progress must be assessed in order to determine whether the parent aide relationship should continue, terminate or change and whether treatment goals need to be amended. Both subjective and objective data can be used to evaluate the client's improvement. The following are suggested ways this can be accomplished.

- The CPS worker can evaluate the parent's improvement by comparing the changes in the parent to the performance objectives. The questionnaire in Appendix D can be used to make this evaluation; it should be completed when the client is matched with the parent aide and again six months later.
- In order to assess changes in the client's self-concept a reliable and valid self esteem scale can be used. This should be administered by the CPS worker when the client is matched with the parent aide and six months later. The Tennessee Self-Concept Scale\* could be used for this purpose.
- After six months a conference should be held in which the CPS worker, the parent aide and program director discuss their subjective estimates of the client's improvement.

## Overall Program Evaluation

In evaluating the overall success of the parent aide program, a number of factors should be taken into account, including: client improvement, client evaluation of the program, parent aide evaluation of the program, CPS worker assessment of the parent aide and of the program.

The parent aide program can be evaluated by assessing client improvement in terms of the number of contacts the client had with the parent aide. The exhibit on the following page is an example of a contact sheet that should be completed by all parent aides. The evaluator can then look for patterns in client improvement as they relate to the number or type of contacts with the parent aide.

\* Fiffs, W.H. *Tennessee Self-Concept Scale, Counselor Readings and Tests*, Nashville, Tennessee.

EXHIBIT XII  
SAMPLE CONTACT SHEET

List all contacts with the parent, including phone calls, shopping trips, home visits, etc. Star (\*) all contacts initiated by the client.

Clients who have worked with parent aides should be asked to give their negative or positive opinions of the program and to describe how the program has benefitted them.

Parent aides should evaluate the program at six month intervals either through discussion or in writing. Their evaluation could include comments or suggestions on supervision, support available to them, and the working relationships with full-time staff.

CPS workers should be given an opportunity to evaluate both specific parent aides particularly in terms of client improvement and the program in general. They may have suggestions on recruitment, screening or training of parent aides, on supervisory methods, and on matching procedures.

APPENDIX A  
SAMPLE APPLICATION AND  
CONTRACT FORMS

# SAMPLE APPLICATION FORM.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ Social Security Number \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_

HOW LONG HAVE YOU LIVED IN THIS AREA? \_\_\_\_\_

BIRTHDATE \_\_\_\_\_ PLACE OF BIRTH \_\_\_\_\_ CITY \_\_\_\_\_ COUNTY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_

MARITAL STATUS \_\_\_\_\_ If presently married, give husband's name and occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

DESCRIBE YOUR CURRENT FAMILY COMPOSITION (include birthdates and sex of children)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

YOUR EDUCATION (circle highest completed) High School: 1 2 3 4 Junior College: 1 2  
Four Year College: 1 2 3 4 Graduate: 1 2 3 4 Other: \_\_\_\_\_

If you have education beyond high school, describe major areas, special training, degrees, etc. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

DO YOU DRIVE? Yes No DO YOU HAVE A CAR AVAILABLE TO YOU? Yes No  
HAVE YOU HAD ANY DRIVING CITATIONS IN THE PAST THREE YEARS? Yes No

GIVE A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF YOUR CURRENT HEALTH HISTORY: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

DESCRIBE YOUR CURRENT INVOLVEMENT IN COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES, CLUBS, CHURCH, ETC. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

BRIEF EMPLOYMENT HISTORY \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

IF YOU ARE CURRENTLY EMPLOYED OR ENROLLED IN SCHOOL, PLEASE DESCRIBE \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

HAVE YOU EVER WORKED IN A VOLUNTEER CAPACITY BEFORE? Yes No Please Describe: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

HOW DID YOU LEARN ABOUT THE PARENT AIDE PROGRAM? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

WHY WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE A PARTICIPANT IN THE PARENT AIDE PROGRAM? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

APPROXIMATELY HOW MUCH TIME CAN YOU CONTRIBUTE WEEKLY AS A PARENT AIDE? \_\_\_\_\_

CAN YOU BE "ON CALL" EVENINGS, WEEKENDS, 24 HOUR BASIS? \_\_\_\_\_

IDENTIFY TWO PERSONAL REFERENCES:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

I understand that after successfully completing my training period, I will be expected to serve a minimum of six months in the Parent Aide Program. If unforeseen circumstances should prevent me from fulfilling this obligation, I will submit my written resignation to the program director with as much advance notice as circumstances permit.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

If additional pages are needed to answer the questions fully, please initial each page and attach to this application.

A-1

REQUEST FOR PARENT AIDE

Date of Request: \_\_\_\_\_

Worker: \_\_\_\_\_

Case #: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent: \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Race: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Area: \_\_\_\_\_

Abuse/Neglect: \_\_\_\_\_

Directions to Home: \_\_\_\_\_

Family Members:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

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## SAMPLE PARENT CONTRACT

DIRECTIONS: Four copies should be signed by parent and assigned CPS worker prior to being signed by parent aide and parent aide director. One copy should be given to parent and to parent aide, and one copy should be kept in case record and in parent aide record.

=====

### PARENT'S AGREEMENT:

#### I AGREE TO:

1. Work with a parent aide assigned by the Layton County Department of Social Services.
2. Always keep appointments with the parent aide.
3. Not misuse the parent aide as a babysitting service. I understand that the parent aide is coming into my home to assist and support me in my responsibilities as a parent and not as someone to assist my child(ren) directly.
4. At any time that I feel I can no longer work with a particular parent aide, I will notify \_\_\_\_\_ immediately to discuss this with him/her.
5. Allow information regarding me and my family to be exchanged between the parent aide and the Layton County Department of Social Services.

(Signature of Parent)

(Date)

(Signature of CPS Worker)

(Parent Aide)

(Parent Aide Director)

(Date)

LAYTON COUNTY CHILD-PROTECTIVE SERVICES  
PARENT AIDE CONTRACT

To be completed by parent aide and responsible staff person together  
Complete 3 copies

PARENT AIDE  
NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

RESPONSIBLE STAFF  
NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

AGENCY: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

ASSIGNMENT: Program -- Child abuse and neglect  
(location)

JOB DESCRIPTION: Provide a supportive relationship to parent through regular, weekly contacts

GOALS OF ASSIGNMENT: Improve parental skills and ability of parent to reach out to others in times of stress.

EXPECTATIONS OF PARENT AIDES: (1) Attend bi-weekly group meetings (2) Maintain confidentiality on all assigned cases (3) Share information and insights with CPS workers (4) Understand that CPS worker maintains responsibility for the case (5) Report monthly hours (6) Attend evaluation session every six months.

PARENT AIDE TIME COMMITMENT: six months with a minimum of 4-6 hours per week client contact

EXPECTATIONS OF RESPONSIBLE STAFF PERSON: (1) Be available for case consultation by appointment (2) Provide ongoing supervision and support to the parent aide (3) Attend monthly group meetings (4) Maintain responsibility for casework planning and treatment

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

PARENT AIDE SIGNATURE

RESPONSIBLE STAFF SIGNATURE

DATE

DATE

APPENDIX B  
REGIONAL CHILD ABUSE AND  
NEGLECT RESOURCE CENTERS

Region I Child Abuse and Neglect Resource Center  
Judge Baker Guidance Center  
295 Longwood Avenue  
Boston, Massachusetts 02115

617-232-8390  
(CT, ME, MA, RI, VT, NH)

Region II Child Abuse and Neglect Resource Center  
College of Human Ecology  
Cornell University  
MVR Hall  
Ithaca, New York 14853

607-256-7794  
(NJ, NY, PR, VI)

Region III Child Abuse and Neglect Resource Center  
Howard University Institute for Urban Affairs and Research  
2935 Upton Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20008

202-686-6770  
(DC, DE, MD, PA, VA, WV)

Region IV Child Abuse and Neglect Resource Center  
Regional Institute for Social Welfare Research  
P.O. Box 152  
Athens, Georgia 30601

404-542-7614  
(AL, FL, GA, KY, MS, NC, SC, TN)

Region V Child Abuse and Neglect Resource Center  
Graduate School of Social Work  
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53201

414-963-4184  
(IL, IN, MI, MN, OH, WI)

Region VI Child Abuse and Neglect Resource Center  
Graduate School of Social Work  
University of Texas at Austin  
Austin, Texas 78712

512-471-4067  
(AR, LA, NM, OK, TX)

Region VII Child Abuse and Neglect Resource Center  
Institute of Child Behavior and Development  
University of Iowa, Oakdale Campus  
Oakdale, Iowa 52319

319-353-4825  
(IA, KS, MO, NE)

Region VIII Child Abuse and Neglect Resource Center  
National Center for the Prevention and Treatment of  
Child Abuse and Neglect  
1205 Oneida Street  
Denver, Colorado 80220

303-321-3963  
(CO, MT, ND, SD, UT, WY)

Region IX Child Abuse and Neglect Resource Center  
Department of Special Education  
California State University  
5151 State University Drive  
Los Angeles, California 90032

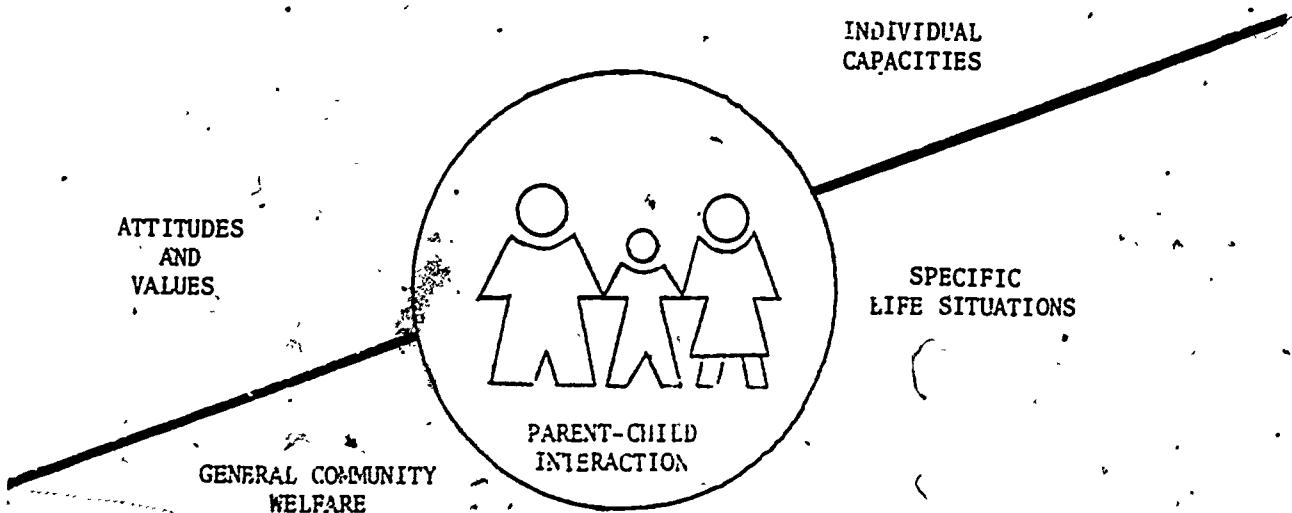
213-224-3283  
(AZ, CA, HI, NV, Guam, Trust Terr.)

Region X Child Abuse and Neglect Resource Center  
Western Federation for Human Service  
157 Yesler Way, #208  
Seattle, Washington 98104

206-624-5480  
(AK, ID, OR, WA)

APPENDIX C

FORCES AFFECTING PARENT-CHILD INTERACTIONS



#### ATTITUDES AND VALUES

- Attitudes toward Children
- Changing Family Roles
- Attitudes toward Violence
- Attitudes toward Corporal Punishment
- Economic and Social Competition
- Mobility
- Racism
- Religion

#### GENERAL COMMUNITY WELFARE

- Child Protective Services
- CPS
- Police
- Courts
- Problem Oriented Agencies
- Mental Health
- Self Help Groups
- Foster Care
- Drug/Alcohol Programs
- Job Counseling/Training
- Therapeutic Day Care
- Special Education for Children
- Public Assistance
- Unemployment Benefits
- Various Helping Professionals
- Community Institutions
- Schools
- Day Care
- Police
- Recreational Facilities
- Church
- Business
- Social/Fraterna Organizations
- Media

#### INDIVIDUAL CAPACITIES

- Mental Health
- Physical Health
- Education
- Intelligence
- Past Life Experiences

#### SPECIFIC LIFE SITUATIONS

- Marital Situation
- Job Situation
- Extended Family Situation
- Characteristics of Child(ren)
- Housing Situation
- Financial Situation
- Degree of Contact/
- Isolation from others

APPENDIX D

EVALUATION PROCEDURES

PARENT AIDE PROGRAM QUESTIONNAIRE

PROGRAM EVALUATION

PROGRESS EVALUATION

To be completed by the CPS worker at the point the Parent aide is matched to the family.

Please ask the parent aide to keep a record of the times the parent has approached (by telephone or otherwise) him/her for assistance. This record is to be kept throughout the parent aide/client relationship.

\*\*\*\*\*  
What are the number of incidents of abuse or neglect in the family in the last six months?

Who are the people or helping type organizations the parent contacts in times of crisis or stress? (talk to them and verify whether they are contacted for help).

Do the parents keep appointments related to the care of their children (teacher's conferences, social agencies, etc.)?

Does the parent demonstrate he/she can control him/herself when the children are difficult or when they express negative feelings toward the parent?

What disciplinary measures do the parents use? Are these measures fair and consistent?

To be administered at the end of six months.

\*\*\*\*\*  
What are the number of incidents of abuse or neglect in the family in the last six months?

Who are the people or helping type organizations the parent contacts in times of crisis or stress? (talk to them and verify whether they are contacted for help).

Do the parents keep appointments related to the care of their children (teacher's conferences, social agencies, etc.)?

Does the parent demonstrate he/she can control him/herself when the children are difficult or when they express negative feelings toward the parent?

What disciplinary measures do the parents use? Are these measures fair and consistent?

## PROGRAM EVALUATION

## PROGRESS EVALUATION

How does the parent describe his/her disciplinary techniques? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Is the home environment relaxed and free of major conflicts? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Does the parent express a desire to improve as a parent? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Does the parent think the behavior of his/her child is congruent with that of other children the same age? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Does the parent describe the child as an individual with needs, desires and rights of his/her own? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Does the parent discuss the child in positive terms? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Does the parent express the desire to enroll in a parenting course? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Does the parent approach the child or express approval of the child during play periods? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Do the children seem relaxed in the presence of the parents? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How does the parent describe his/her disciplinary techniques? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Is the home environment relaxed and free of major conflicts? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Does the parent express a desire to improve as a parent? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Does the parent think the behavior of his/her child is congruent with that of other children the same age? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Does the parent describe the child as an individual with needs, desires and rights of his/her own? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Does the parent discuss the child in positive terms? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Does the parent express the desire to enroll in a parenting course? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Does the parent approach the child or express approval of the child during play periods? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Do the children seem relaxed in the presence of the parents? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## PROGRAM EVALUATION

Do they seek the parent's help? \_\_\_\_\_

Do they appear frightened of the parents?

If the child(ren) have been removed from the home, do the parents keep scheduled visits?

What are the number of situational crises the family has experienced in the last six months? (e.g., evictions--a situation viewed by the parent as overwhelming.)

How frequent have your contacts been with the family in the last six months? (number)

NOTE OTHER PERTINENT FACTS: \_\_\_\_\_

### PROGRESS EVALUATION

Do they seek the parent's help? \_\_\_\_\_

Do they appear frightened of the parents?

- If the child(ren) have been removed from the home, do the parents keep scheduled visits?

What are the number of situational crises the family has experienced in the last six months? (e.g., evictions--a situation viewed by the parent as overwhelming.)

How frequent have your contacts been with the family in the last six months? (number)

If there has been an increase in contacts, does this result from the parent aide helping the client openly express his/her problems?

If there has been a decrease in frequency of contacts, does it indicate that the parent aide's efforts have reduced the need for your involvement?

Do the parents think that involvement with parent-aides is valuable? \_\_\_\_\_

What specific improvement has the parent made in coping with the children (from the parent aide's observations and comments by the CPS worker)?

## PROGRAM EVALUATION

### PROGRESS EVALUATION

What specific improvement has the parent demonstrated in his/her child rearing techniques?

NOTE OTHER PERTINENT FACTS:

APPENDIX E

SAMPLE HANDOUTS

## What Are Parent Aides?\*

In order for individuals and families to grow and function normally, they must have the support of warm and understanding outsiders. This role is normally filled by friends, relatives, neighbors, classmates, work associates, or members of other social groups. But in a mobile society like ours, such helpful relationships are easily broken and are difficult to reestablish.

Families who abuse or neglect their children often lack these warm, supportive relationships. Because of this lack, these parents look to their children for the warmth and understanding they need. However, children are not always able to meet their parents' needs.

Abusive and neglectful families are often in a state of crisis. The crises may result from minor or major problems but, because these families have so few resources to call upon, they very seldom resolve crises successfully. Parents believe they have failed when they are unable to resolve crises, and this feeling of failure leads to abuse or neglect.

Parent aides can act as friends to abusive or neglectful parents who have no one else to rely on. Parent aides act in a normal, friendly way toward these parents. But there is a unique characteristic of this friendship; it is one-sided. The parent aide will be doing *all* the listening, sympathizing, and initiating of contacts. The parent aide can help the parent explore possible solutions to problems, and help the parent develop confidence and responsibility for their own decisions. The parent aide can also point out community resources that might be of help to the parents.

How will the parents react to the parent aide? At first, parents may have difficulty trusting parent aides. They may see parent aides as just another authority figure there to criticize. The parents may not be home when the aide comes over. Or they may call at inconvenient times and complain about their children. But, eventually, the parents will begin to rely on the parent aides. They will realize that the aides are their friends, that the aides are spending time with them because they care about the parents as individuals. Gradually, as the parents come to trust and to lean on the parent aides, their pattern of relying on their children to have their needs met will change.

\*This material was adapted from training materials developed by Herron County, Michigan and the SCAN Center in Spokane, Washington.

What kind of person can become an effective parent aide? Parent aides must have been raised in a warm, supportive environment, surrounded by understanding people. Parent aides should be experienced parents, familiar with the normal frustrations of raising children and with the typical behaviors of children of various ages. Parent aides should be around the same age as the parents they are working with, because they will be more likely to experience common feelings and problems. And parent aides must have a flexible time schedule so they can meet with the parents frequently.

## A DOZEN TIPS FOR PARENT AIDES\*

Be honest with your family. Only this will allow them to trust and respect you. Don't make promises you can't fulfill. Be consistent in your promises. They have likely suffered much disappointment and confusion.

Keep in contact with the family. See them regularly. Let them know they can count on you, and that you expect them to be responsible, too.

Be patient. The family's progress towards trusting you as well as progress in their own behavior may be slow.

Don't do for the family what they can do for themselves. Help them think through their problems and find ways to stimulate them to discover their own solutions. This will improve their confidence in their own coping ability.

Don't be overwhelmed by multiple problems. Help the parents to separate their problems, to deal with each one individually. While working on one problem, resist the pressure to be distracted by another.

Be prepared for set-backs and disappointments. Your relationship with the parents may be like no other they have known, if you refuse to reject them. Set-backs may present crises which can enhance your relationship if you stick with it.

Give attention and affection without expecting outward thanks. Be sensitive to the parents' positive behavior and reward it with attention. Try to ignore behavior that is negative unless it appears that this behavior will harm them or others.

Listen to the parents and learn how they feel. After you know the facts and feelings involved, relate to their needs. However, don't be naive and all-believing. When in doubt, try to dig out the facts. At the same time, though, try to exhibit as much as possible. Give advice sparingly.

Empathize. Put yourself in the parents' place. This will be easier if you pay careful attention not just to the words they say, but to subtle, non-verbal messages that are communicated.

Discover your family's strengths as well as weaknesses. They have heard enough criticism of their weaknesses. Emphasize good points; these are the building blocks to success.

Respect confidences. Let the parents know you will not discuss private information with their friends or others not directly involved. However, you must let them know that you will be in touch with CPS staff.

Be human. Let the parents know when you are happy or disappointed with their actions, but don't attack their character.

\*SCAN Training Materials, SCAN Volunteer Service, Inc., Little Rock, Arkansas 72201.

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